

Pair Zindagi Hai!

The filmmaker-hero combo in Bollywood

The filmmaker-hero combination forms the most crucial part of Hindi films! This pair decides and defines commercial parameters like the selling price of a film and the initial opening that it takes — Govinda films with David Dhawan (like *Jodi No. 1*) fetch a fantastic initial as compared to the star's non-Dhawan films, like *Albela*. If powerful enough, the director-actor team can even set trends, like the Shakti Samanta-Rajesh Khanna team (after *Aradhana*) or the Manmohan Desai-Amitabh Bachchan combo (after *Amar Akbar Anthony*) did. Obviously, with egos and emotions at a peak, thanks to their high tension work ethics and lives, some of these alliances ended up bitterly. But if the *filmi kalakaar* is high-strung, he is also for the same reason sentimental, and so we have had filmmakers and their heroes attempting patch-ups with varying degrees of personal and commercial success or failure once they found the same rapport or box-office magic missing without their fav 'partner'. A look at the combos, arranged star-wise for convenience. In most cases, the team-up has been between director and star, but producers also figure here, hence the term 'filmmaker'.

ASHOK KUMAR

Ashok Kumar was a lab assistant to Himanshu Rai, head honcho of the famous Bombay Talkies. When the leading man of Rai's *Jeevan Naiyya* fell ill, on the eve of the film's shooting, Rai persuaded a reluctant Ashok Kumar to don the greasepaint. Ashok was to star opposite Rai's star-wife Devika Rani. Little did Rai

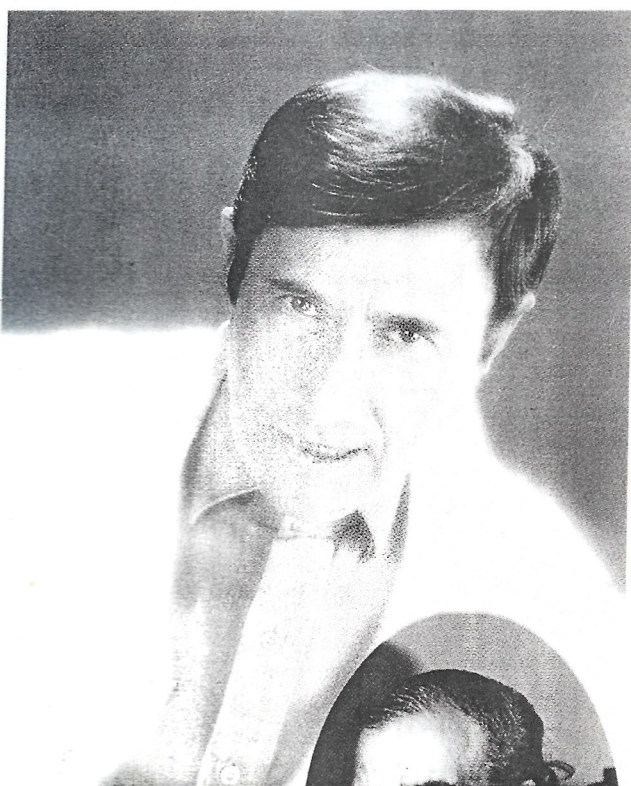


— Himanshu R.

know that he was presenting the nation with an artiste who would go on to become one of its greatest actors. **Acchut Kanya**, **Bandhan**, **Kangan** and **Jhoola** were the famous films they did before Himanshu Rai passed away.

DEV ANAND

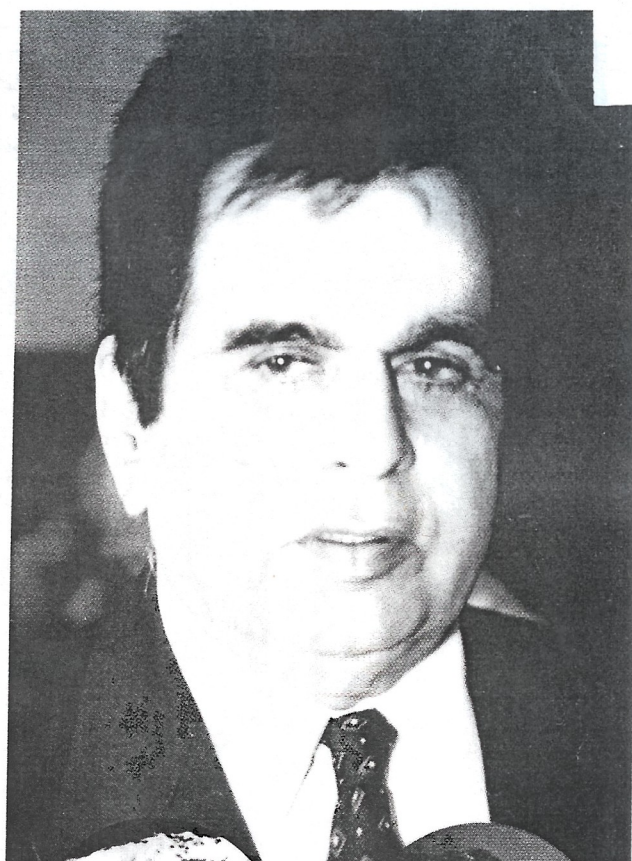
The evergreen hero — he did not know it or plan this then — struck an early rapport with geniuses like Raj



Khosla (C.I.D., Solva Saal, Navketan's *Kala Pani* — though *Milap*, *Bambai Ka Babu* and Navketan's *Shareef Badmaash* flopped) and Guru Dutt (whom he introduced as director in *Baazi*, the film that established the Navketan banner in a big way in 1950). Dutt later directed Dev in *Jaal* and produced C.I.D. with him. But the foremost filmmaker associated with Dev was his talented younger brother who he introduced with Navketan's *Nau Do Gyarah* in 1954. The string of notables that explored Dev to the full both as star (*Johny Mera Naam*) and actor (*Guide*) included both Dev's own productions and outside films like *Kala Bazaar*, *Teen Devian*, *Tere Ghar Ke Saamne*, *Jewel Thief*, *Tere Mere Sapne* and *Chhupa Rustom*, apart from the ghost-directed *Hum Dono*.



— Raj Khosla



— Mehboob Khan



— Subhash Ghai

DILIP KUMAR

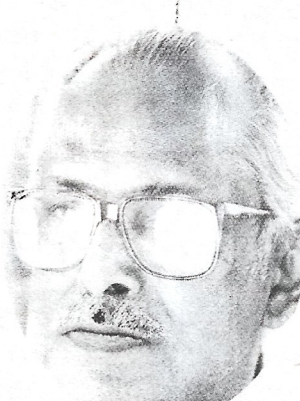
In the late '40s, '50s and early '60s. Dilip Kumar had his own loyal campwallah like Mehboob Khan (*Andaz*, *Amar*, *Aan*). But his most consistent association came when he did his trilogy of strong elderly characters in Subhash Ghai's *Vidhaata*, *Karma* and *Saudagar*.

DHARMENDRA

Dharmendra was a fixture with his Columbus — Arjun Hingorani, despite the complete failure of his debut film *Dil Bhi Tera Hum Bhi Tere*. They succeeded with *Kab? Kyoon? Aur Kahan?*, *Kahani Kisमत Ki* and *Kaatilon Ke Kaatil*, though the track record was far from impressive or consistent. Dharam's fare with Hrishikesh



– Arjun Hingorani



– Hrishikesh M.

Mukherjee (Anupama, Majhli Didi, Satyak, Guddi, Chaitali, Chupke Chupke, Laathi) was far more satisfying, even if commercially erratic.



Shammi Kapoor was always choosy about his films. Nasir Husain brought Shammi's career on track with the 'Rebel Hero' image in Tumsa Nahin Dekha and the team

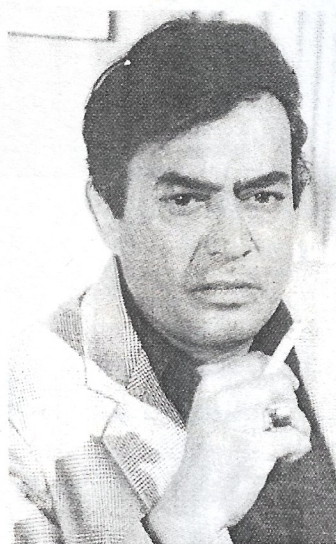
– Nasir Husain

clicked again with Dil Deke Dekho. When Dev Anand opted out of Teesri Manzil, Shammi sportingly stepped in even though this time Nasir was only the writer-producer and Vijay Anand was at the helm. The film was successful too. Shammi also established a successful team with Shakti Samanta (Singapore, Kashmir Ki Kali, An Evening In Paris, Jaane Anjaane and the flop Pagla Kahin Ka) and Bhappi Sonie (Jaanwar, Brahmachari and two more flops — Jawan Mohabbat and Preetam).

SANJEEV KUMAR

Sanjeev Kumar was best known for his sensitive association with Gulzar (Parichay, Koshish, Aandhi, Mausam, Angoor, and Namkeen) but gave two of his

career-best performances under Ramesh Sippy in Seeta Aur Geeta and Sholay. Sadly for us, he could not complete his Sippy trilogy — he turned down



the role of Shaakaal in Shaan.

SHASHI KAPOOR

Commercially, Shashi Kapoor was best associated with Yash Chopra (Dharamputra, Waqt, Deewar, Trishul, Kabhi Kabhie, Kala Patthar, Silsila and also his productions Doosara Aadmi and Sawaal) and worked more frequently with

– Gulzar



– Yash Chopra

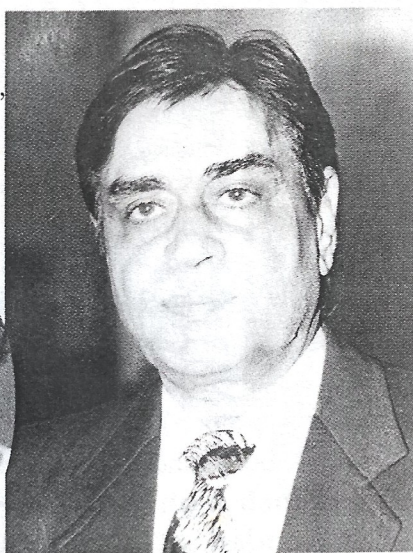
Chopra than even Bachchan did. But Shashi (whose high quantum of films and good nature made his 'repeat' frequency high with filmmakers) is still primarily associated with Suraj Prakash, the filmmaker who was addicted to him (*Mehndi Lage Mere Haath*, *Jab Jab Phool Khile*, *Aamne Samne*, and the flops — *Juari*, *Raja Saab*, *Vachan* and *Sweetheart*). Suraj may not have given him a string of hits, but he worked with him as solo hero, and never pinned him to any image, or genre of movie.

RAJENDRA KUMAR

The darling of the south prior to the arrival of Jeetendra, the late actor was a pet especially with Sridhar (*Dil Ek*



— Ramanand S.



Mandir, *Suraj*, *Saathi*) and in Mumbai with Mohan Kumar (*Aas Ke Panchhi*, *Ayee Milan Ki Bela*, *Aman*, *Anjaana*, *Aap Aye Bahaar Aayi*) and Ramanand Sagar (*Zindagi*, *Arzoo*, *Geet*, *Lalkar*).

RAAJ KUMAR

The egoistic, stylized scene-stealer struck rapport with Ram Maheshwari (*Kaajal*, *Neel Kamal*, *Karmayogi*



— Mehul Kumar



and the flop *Chambal Ki Kasam*). Late in his career,

the eccentric Jaani, his image blown to a size greater than the fine actor within, gave a consecutive trilogy of hits with Mehul Kumar (*Marte Dam Tak*, *Jungbaaz* and *Tirangaa*).

MANOJ KUMAR

Traditionally, Manoj is associated with himself as director more than anyone else, probably because even the three hits he gave in a



— Sohanlal K.



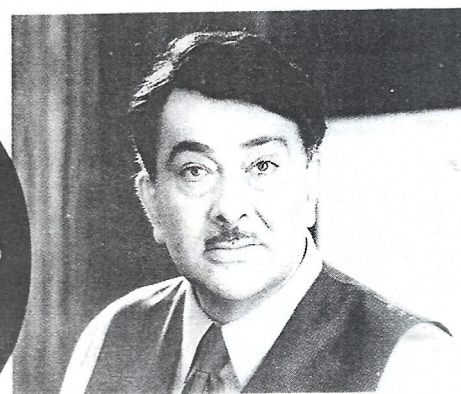
row with Sohanlal Kanwar — *Pehchan*, *Beiman* and *Sanyasi* (and some other films) are said to be ghost-directed by him, on the premise that that Kanwar could never deliver a big hit minus Manoj.

RANDHIR KAPOOR

Randhir was part of what is probably the



— Ramesh Behl



most emotionally-driven actor-filmmaker association of Hindi cinema — his *dosti* with Ramesh Behl. Behl let go of Kapoor only after he quit acting (*Jawaani*, *Apne Apne*) and for a rare film in the '80s after his market declined (*Baseraa* and *Yeh Vaada Raha* directed by others) but otherwise steadfastly stuck to *Daboo* (*Dil Diwana*, *Pukar*, *Jaane Jaana*, *Harjace*). A fine association this!

— DR. RAJIV VIJAYAKAR